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ABSTRACT

An 8-year study of academic achievement, student performance, and education costs in rural northeastern Brazil investigated the presumption that students automatically perform better when more school resources are provided. Two main topics were examined: the success of EDURURAL, an educational intervention project in rural Brazil sponsored by the World Bank; and the educational policies that could improve school performance and academic achievement within a fixed budget. Findings indicate that selectively investing in school resources improves educational performance, boosts promotion rates, and lowers grade repetition. The reduction in grade repetition saves enough in operating costs to offset the original investment in added resources. Other findings emphasize: (1) the fragility of the schools studies; (2) the educational value of school resources and school organization; and (3) the importance of highly skilled teachers for student achievement (and the impossibility of measuring the quality of specific teachers). Cost-saving guides are discussed that can be used by countries throughout the developing world to improve their educational policies. Eight chapters are divided into three sections on background, research findings, and significance. Appendices describe the tests used, their reliability, and results; list and describe statistics for variables used in analytic models; and present many statistical tables. Additional data tables are interspersed throughout the book. Contains 171 references and an index. (KS)

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